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Legislative
Assembly
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Assemblée
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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

E-16

Journal des débats (Hansard)

E-16

Standing Committee on
Estimates

Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses

Committee business

Travaux du comité

2nd Session
41st Parliament

Tuesday 30 May 2017

2^e session
41^e législature

Mardi 30 mai 2017

Chair: Cheri DiNovo
Clerk: Eric Rennie

Présidente : Cheri DiNovo
Greffier : Eric Rennie



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES

Tuesday 30 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Mardi 30 mai 2017

The committee met at 0904 in committee room 1.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): We will begin. Good morning. Before we begin, I would like to inform committee members that the Clerk has distributed responses to outstanding questions provided by the ministries that appeared before the committee last year.

As you know, the Administrator of the province of Ontario has transmitted the estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2018, to the Legislative Assembly. Pursuant to standing order 59, these printed estimates, upon tabling, are deemed to be referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates. All members of the House should have received a copy of the 2017-18 printed estimates when they were tabled on Thursday, May 18, 2017.

The objectives of today's meeting are:

- (1) To select the estimates of certain ministries or offices for review by the committee; and
- (2) To determine the date on which the committee will begin the consideration of the selected estimates.

Standing order 60 sets out the process by which the committee makes its selections. Essentially, each of the recognized parties on the committee shall select the estimates of either one or two ministries or offices in each of the two rounds of selection.

The official opposition selects first, followed by the third party, then by the government. After two rounds of selection, the committee will have selected anywhere from a minimum of six to a maximum of 12 ministries or offices for review.

In making its selection, each party also determines how much time is to be allocated to the consideration of each ministry or office selected. A maximum of 15 hours is permitted per selection. For example, if only one selection is made in a round, that single selection could be reviewed for a maximum of 15 hours. If two selections are made in a round, both of them could be reviewed for a combined maximum of 15 hours. How the division of those 15 hours takes place is up to the party making the selection.

At the conclusion of the two rounds of review, the committee could spend up to a maximum of 90 hours in scrutinizing the estimates of all the selected ministries or

offices. Pursuant to standing order 60(c), these selections are to be reviewed in the order that they were chosen, and this can only be changed by an order of the House.

The estimates of those ministries or offices not selected for consideration will be deemed to have been passed by the committee. As Chair, I will report those estimates back to the House and they will be deemed to be adopted and concurred in by the House.

Any supplementary estimates of selected ministries and offices shall be considered by the committee within the time allocated during this selection process.

In accordance with standing order 63(a), the committee must present a report to the House with respect to the estimates it selected and considered by the third Thursday of November this year: November 16, 2017. If the committee fails to report by the third Thursday in November, the estimates and supplementary estimates before the committee will be deemed to be passed by the committee and deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

I would also like to add a note that if members could please look at the list of ministries provided by the Clerk, and give the correct names of the ministries when they do select them.

Do members have any questions before we begin?
Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): We were going to recess when we got to the NDP, but because the NDP is not present here, the suggestion from the Clerk—and it's a good one—is to just take a brief recess now. So if we could recess for 15 minutes and be back here at 25 past nine.

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Nine-thirty? Okay, 9:30 it is. Any problem with that? We'll see you all at 9:30. Thank you.

The committee recessed from 0909 to 0911.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): We'll start with the official opposition. Mr. Harris.

Mr. Michael Harris: We won't be selecting our round of estimates and would prefer to do that at the first meeting in the fall.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Okay, so is it my understanding and is it our understanding that this means September 12, the first Tuesday that the House is back in September? Is that correct?

I'm going to read a statement for this eventuality. Standing order 60(b) states, "The estimates of the ministries and offices to be considered by the committee shall be selected in two rounds by members of the committee such that in each round the members of the party forming the official opposition shall choose first, the members of a recognized party having the third largest membership in the House shall choose second and the members of the party forming the government shall choose third."

Since a caucus is not prepared to make the selections required by the standing order this week, we are unable to proceed. For this reason, I will reschedule a selection of ministries and offices to the first available meeting date this fall, which will be Tuesday, September 12, 2017.

Yes, Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Chair, before we make that determination, I wonder if I'd have an opportunity to maybe ask the member opposite what is causing this delay. It's so unfortunate that we're not going to give staff an opportunity to prepare over the lengthy summer period. I can't imagine why the member of the official opposition wouldn't be prepared to come forward and do the work of this government, the work of the House. It's almost unprecedented, certainly in my time here. Maybe he'd like to give an explanation. Is his caucus so dysfunctional at the moment that considerations of new parties, Trillium parties and such, has made it impossible to proceed and just to deal with the simple administrative matter of choosing a ministry?

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Harris, would you like to respond?

Mr. Michael Harris: We just literally received the estimates that were tabled recently in the Legislature. I think it's not out of the norm to ask that we make those selections in the fall, and that's what we're going to be doing.

An additional note: If possible, I would like the committee to be scheduled in 151—now giving the scheduling people within the Clerk's office an opportunity to, perhaps, make sure that we're in 151 when this committee reconvenes.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Harris has responded, but he's also made a request that the next meeting be in room 151. Is that the will of the committee, that this next meeting be, if possible, in room 151?

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, it's not a request. It's just a—

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I'm just testing the room here. Is that the will of the committee—

Mr. Michael Harris: If possible.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): If possible, room 151? Anybody have an objection to that?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I wouldn't have an objection to it, but we're actually making selections right now, so if we're not making selections right now, we'll have to hold down that question until we've made selections.

The Chair (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Okay. Seeing as we cannot proceed at this point, then I declare that this meeting is going to be adjourned until September 12 at the same time. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 0915.

A faint, light-gray watermark of a classical building's facade is centered behind the text. It features four columns supporting an entablature and a triangular pediment.

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